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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to acquaint literacy tutors with the techniques of tutoring small groups of learners enrolled in a basic reading program. The first chapter compares one-on-one and small group instruction. Chapter 2 covers the following aspects of organizing a group: interviewing; adding people to established groups; and confirming the first session (preparing, encouraging participation, introducing group members, setting rules, planning the schedule, confirming the site, and discussing and setting goals). The role of the reading tutor in the five stages of group dynamics--forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning--is examined. The next chapter covers the following aspects of instructional methodology and materials: language experience and group story activities; sight words; phonics; word patterns; the write-to-read method; journal writing; the practice of reading material written by others; spelling; before-, during-, and after-reading activities; and skills resource files. Chapter 5 contains examples of forms that may be used in recordkeeping and lesson planning for small groups. The final chapter presents comments on small group instruction that were made by literacy tutors. A list of suggested resource concludes the guide. (MN)

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TUTORING SMALL GROUPS:

Basic Reading

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The writing of this handbook has truly been a joint effort. The people listed on the title page have given freely of their expertise, from the first meeting of the Tutoring Small Groups: Basic Reading Task Force through the final reviewing and editing of the manuscript by LVA staff and consultants.

We are grateful to all those who volunteer their time and skills to establish and maintain the professional quality of LVA's training materials.

About LVA:

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., a national, non-profit educational organization, provides materials and services to assist in the development of volunteer tutorial programs in basic reading and conversational English. Expanding beyond its national affiliate network, LVA supplies materials and consulting services in tutor training, program organization and management to correctional, library, adult basic education and other literacy programs.

Tutoring Small Groups: Basic Reading

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Since you are reading this message you already know the magnitude of the illiteracy problem in the United States. About 27 million teens and adults can be classified as functionally illiterate – meaning they have problems reading such materials as: street signs, menus, job applications, want ads and bus schedules. The task of teaching those who want to learn is huge and is growing. Awareness campaigns and publicity activities are drawing more and more students to literacy programs.

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA), and other similar organizations continue to make significant contributions towards solving the problem by their tradition of one-to-one (OTO) tutoring. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that even greater efforts are needed. Instruction for tutoring small groups of 3-5 basic reading students can help meet this need. We retain the term tutoring when referring to the kind of individualized instruction that is done in a small group of three-five students.

This book is intended for basic reading tutors who want to teach in small group settings and recognize the advantages to many students of studying in a small group with its variety of stimulation, support, and viewpoints rather than in the intensity of a one-to-one situation. Each approach has its definite advantages and each may be appropriate for a given student at a given point in his or her learning career.

At first you might think of working in small groups as something totally new and foreign. However, small group membership is not foreign to either you or students. Most people are members of some kind of small group whether it is a church committee, a group of friends who "hang out" together, an informal network of neighbors, workers, or relatives. These groups or exchange networks play an important role in the non-literate's social life. A study by Arlene Fingeret (1981) revealed that many non-literates see themselves as contributing members of a network in which they traded their practical skills (repair, babysitting, transportation) for other's skills, among them reading.

However, certain skills can be acquired to facilitate group processes.

This book offers direction:

1. Organizing and managing the administration of a small group;
2. Fostering group development for the purpose of teaching reading and enhancing all members' (yours and the students) abilities in communication;
3. Becoming flexible in leadership styles;
4. Encouraging appropriate peer tutoring strategies;
5. Developing both group and individualized activities for tutoring sessions.

Is Small Group Tutoring Right for You?

When tutoring a small group, you can employ all the same techniques you have used in successful one-to-one (OTO) tutoring but on a much broader scale. However, when you tutor a group of several individuals, more preparation is required for every session. The students will have many things in common, but they will also demonstrate many differences. No two will be exactly alike in background, interests, abilities or intent. Therefore, during each tutoring session, certain skills may be taught to the entire group and other skills taught only to those who need them.

Thorough competence in the techniques of teaching reading is the most important skill for group tutoring. The fundamental skills which you learned in a literacy training program should be so familiar to you that you can spend your energies on **what** to present rather than **how** to present it.

Some experience in leading group activities, (i.e. PTA, League of Women Voters, lodge meetings, etc.) is another important quality for group tutoring. In each session you will want to have the group work as an integrated and cohesive unit part of the time. Group discussions, group problem solving, role playing and simulations are crucial to the development of a sense of trust and support among group members.

This book assumes that you have had training in tutoring basic literacy skills and that the task of tutoring a small group will be easier if you have had experience tutoring in a one-to-one situation. It also assumes you subscribe to a philosophy of reading similar to that described in **Tutor** (Colvin, Root, 1984)

> . . . reading involves taking into account all that the reader knows about his language and the world. Reading is a language-thinking act. This means that a reader processes print in much the same way a listener processes speech . . . in teaching reading, you will take advantage of your student's knowledge of what makes sense in English and the world. You start with material from your student's own interests and experience . . . your teaching will center on your student's experiences, vocabulary and needs. You will expand that knowledge by reading to him, encouraging him to read silently on his own, and by directly teaching word recognition skills of decoding and use of context.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. "Can I be sensitive and responsive to the needs of each of my students?"

The group tutor must be alert to the needs and problems

of each of the group's members. Instructional time should be shared with all of the students.

2. "Do I have the flexibility to let the group's needs and wants influence my agenda?"

The need for flexibility is necessary because group members are individuals. You need to be able to change lesson plans and seize opportunities to focus on student interests. You might find yourself, for example, using as content for discussion a raise in bus fares rather than your planned activity. You would be flexible enough to change your lesson plan, yet still be working within a planned structure.

3. "Am I willing to vary my leadership style depending on the group's stage of development and independence?"

In group tutoring, as in the middle and latter stages of tutoring in a one-to-one situation, you will be called on to be more of a "joiner" than a "boss." It is important to develop a sense of cohesion and camaraderie in your group. This is done through the kind of leadership that is willing to share the decision-making with the group, that takes ideas and topics offered and works them into subsequent lessons.

4. "Am I able to put in the time needed to be a small group tutor?"

No formula exists by which you can calculate how much more time you will spend in instructing a group than in one-to-one tutoring. Twice as much is a reasonable estimate. Be sure before you start that your personal schedule can accommodate the demands of group teaching. It is very important to stay with a group so learning is effective.

Considering the advantages to a student in a group, your own interests, abilities and personal characteristics, you are ready to make a commitment. Most of you who have read this far are saying "Yes, small group tutoring seems right for me – How do I get started?" In the chapters following, you will be given practical suggestions for putting together a group, setting up that important first meeting, applying group dynamic principles, adapting one-to-one methodology to a group setting, creating and using materials and taking care of administrative details.

Chapter Two: Organizing A Group

Most literacy programs have a waiting list of potential students so you, the tutor, and the person who does the matching of tutor with student in the program should be able to select the three to five people who will make up your group. You will want to foster a team spirit within your group so a degree of compatibility is important. Do not simply assign the top names on the waiting list to a group.

Students should have been tested prior to being considered for group instruction. Those reading at Level I or non-readers should not be included as they generally need the more intensive one-to-one help.

Interviewing

A personal interview with each potential group member is imperative. This interview can be conducted by the potential group tutor, the program's matcher, or someone else whose role is to interview prospective students. In any case the following is addressed to whomever is doing the actual interviewing. If the interviewer is not the tutor, then the tutor must have discussed his or her concerns as a group tutor with the interviewer so that the potential students have the clearest information on which to base their decision to join a group.

The interview should be private. In the discussion the interviewer will make it very clear that joining a group is an **option.** If the student decides against being in a group, assure him or her that an individual tutor will be assigned as soon as one becomes available. The interviewer should describe what the group tutoring process will be like and let the student decide. In all probability, the most important reason for selecting a student to be part of a group is that the student **wants** to be included.

So that the candidates can make a reasoned judgment about wanting to join a group, acquaint them with a few requirements. Emphasize the fact that the participants will be working together much of the time. Some particularly shy or apprehensive people might not like the idea of having their reading problem exposed to the others. On the other hand, the very fact of being able to share common problems can be a positive influence for some students.

As the collaborative nature of group learning is described, find out whether the candidate is able and willing to adjust to the group's decision on time, frequency, and place of meetings. Experience has shown that two two-hour meetings a week are effective for group tutoring sessions. Students need this information in order to know the amount of time commitment they are making. At this point, find out the best times for each individual student to meet. This information provides a practical basis for putting groups of students together. This is also a good opportunity to emphasize the importance of regular attendance. This tends to alleviate the tendency of some students to excuse their absences on the basis of "I'm only one and the group can go on even if I am not there." Point out the fallacy in that reasoning: (1) There are activities that are planned for two or more people working together and one absence hurts the others, (2) the group will have moved on and the absentee will have a hard time catching up, (3) since homework is required between class meetings, an absence makes it harder for the student to keep up with the group.

In addition to letting the students know that they are responsible for regular attendance, let them know at this time that they will be expected to supply their own notebooks, pens, paper, and any books that your program does require of them.

While discussing the above points, the interviewer will also be trying to reach conclusions about the candidate's capacity for dealing with groups. If any special learning problems in the prospective student are discovered, group tutoring is probably inappropriate.

Be aware that some of the problems students have may not be learning problems. Research has shown that many non-readers have hitherto undetected hearing or sight deficiencies. It would be well for the tutor to have information on the location of sight and hearing clinics if she/he suspects a physical difficulty.

It is desirable to have a similarity of goals or interests in a group. A group whose members share a common interest in career advancement, finding a job, enrolling in ABE, general pleasure reading, current events or come from the same community will tend to be more cohesive and supportive. Experienced group tutors indicate that group members can come from a variety of ethnic or religious backgrounds, be of either sex and varying ages and still develop into a cohesive learning group.

Adding People to Established Groups

Once small groups are in existence the interviewer-matcher still will be screening students as they enter the literacy program to decide if they should be assigned to an OTO or a small group for tutoring. Because of attrition due to students moving, changed schedules and personal situations there will always be the possibility of adding new members to established groups.

The interviewer-matcher will need to keep (confidential) records to be able to advise tutors who wish to add student(s) to their groups. Points to be considered deal with: the stage of development at which the group is; the group's feelings about adding members, and the fit of personalities between the prospective student and the other members of the group. Reading abilities are of importance to the degree the group is homogeneous in

its reading levels: if all the group members are at the same skills level, don't add a person far above or below that level; if the group is heterogenous with a wider range of reading abilities, the addition of a new member would not be as disruptive.

There is nothing sacred about the fact of a particular group's composition or longevity. One option for the administration of small groups within a literacy program is to have a yearly review of the composition of existing small groups and give the groups or group's tutors the options of reorganizing with reassignment of tutors and students. Such action is a positive movement towards revitalization of groups which have lost members. Such review and evaluation of groups' compositions and needs are of benefit to the vitality of literacy programing.

Once the decision to add a member to a group has been made, certain things can be done to make such an addition a positive action for each group member. New points of view, new repertoire of skills and new interaction patterns are the positive points of adding the energies of new members. Some of the possible tensions that cannot be ignored are: the new patterns of role interaction if new statuses are invoked, unfamiliarity on the part of the new member with the actual working out of the informal group rules and norms; lack of shared experiences which could make a new member diffident about contributing to the group.

Being aware of the pluses and minuses of adding a new member can go a long way towards meeting the negatives and taking advantage of the positives. The tutor is responsible for initiating a discussion of the changes that will take place when a new member is added and for asking the group to come up with patterns of behavior which will ease the transition of the new member into the group. Simply asking what each of them could do to make the new person feel at home quickly should develop this feelng of involvement in the addition of a new member.

Conducting the First Session

All tutoring sessions should have two overall objectives: to improve the group members' reading skills and to help each group member accomplish individual goals. However, from the very first session you begin to establish a team spirit in your group and convey the concept that this and every session will be important, meaningful and purposeful.

Prepare

Before the first session, contact each student and impress upon them the vital importance of their being at the first meeting and being on time. As each one arrives, present her or him with a name badge on which the first and last name is printed in large, manuscript letters. You, too, will be wearing such a badge.

The name badge serves two purposes. It gives each of the students a sense of identity and individual worth, while also providing a way of seeing how other people's names look in printed form. It is their first "word recognition" exercise.

In addition to the name badges, have each person's name listed on a chalkboard or easel pad. Be sure to use the same kind of manuscript letters as that used on the badges. Start the meeting by tellng the students that the goal of the program is to improve reading skills, do not say that it is to learn how to read. Also tell them what the three specific objectives are for that first session: (1) to get to know each other, (2) to agree on some rules that will direct the tutoring sessions and (3) to learn some new words.

When you have your first meeting, a session at a round table is desirable. If you can't get a round table, use any table but don't you sit at the head of it. Or you could place chairs in a circle for the beginning of the first meeting. Thereafter you will need tables for writing. The arm-desk chairs used in high schools and colleges do not allow enough space for writing and reading materials.

You show your respect for your students by encouraging opinions from all, drawing out the reticient, recognizing the contributions of each one, promoting participation and interaction – these are all useful devices in conveying a feeling of acceptance.

Encourage Participation

The following is a list of behaviors which you can use to encourage discussion and participation of all members in the group. While introduced at the first session, they will be used throughout the life of the group. The following suggestions are adapted from **Tutor Training Manual, Literacy Volunteers of New York City.**

- make frequent eye contact with students to encourage them to talk.
- try to maintain a non-judgmental atmosphere by holding back on your own opinions, at least until the discussion gets going and don't criticize.
- ask open-ended questions: questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection –"What would you have done in this situation?" not "What color shirt did the boy have on?"
- give students time to respond to questions. If there seem to be problems, try rephrasing the question. Avoid answering your own questions.
- try to paraphrase student comments and respond to both the feeling and content of what was said. Paraphrasing will usually encourage students to elaborate on what was said.
- encourage students to talk with each other: "Bill thinks that getting people involved would help – what do other people think?"
- ask students to elaborate on what they say: "Tell us more about why you think that, Mary."
- create structures where students will feel comfortable talking: (1) divide the class into sub-groups to work on particular tasks (2) provide tasks which encourage participation within the sub-group as discussion topics,

writing activities and games (3) vary the class structure from time to time to provide opportunities for as many students as possible to be comfortable and involved, i.e. pairs, groups within larger group, total group instruction.

Introduce Group Members

Sit with the group at the table (or in the circle). This fosters the "We're all in this together" spirit. Tell them that everyone will talk about him or herself for a few minutes so that everyone knows something about each member of the group. As stated previously, start by telling your name, occupation, family status, hobbies and perhaps your reason for being there. This will serve as a guide for the students as to what is expected of them.

Ask for a volunteer to lead off. You can expect something like "Well, my name is Tom Pittman and I am a painter by trade. Right now I'm not working because winter is always a slow time in the painting trade. I am married and we have two boys, six and two years old. I like to fish."

After each has had a turn, smile as you say you are going to find out whether they were all listening. Review the introduction each person made but at some point ask the group members to fill in the right response. You might say, for example, "What did Tom Pittman say he liked to do?" (Fish). Make frequent use of everyone's name during this get-acquainted period and encourage people to ask questions if they want more information.

Set Rules

After each member has learned about the others, they will become comfortable with each other and begin to identify themselves as a group. Next, discuss the rules that will direct the group. First, re-emphasize the importance of having everyone present at each session. Give out your telephone number and stipulate that you must be informed in advance if anyone finds he/she will be absent. After the group has met several times, you might suggest they exchange telephone numbers in order that they might notify the group of an unavoidable absence or to check on the homework assignment. After you have covered the importance of regular attendance, ask if everyone understands this requirement. Some have found it helpful to distribute or to make calendars with the student, marking down the date, time, and place of the group sessions.

Explain that there are a few ground rules. These would include such things as being patient with others who may be having trouble keeping up, listening to suggestions and the questions of others, and allowing others to finish before interrupting.

It is best in most instances to impose a "No Smoking" rule within the meeting room even if the building regulations permit it. A two-hour class should include a 10-minute break.

Plan Schedule

Planning the schedule for the group presents you with your first opportunity to involve the group in making a significant decision. For the first time the participants will see that individual member's needs and preferences are being considered and that the democratic process is at work. Even these early decisions on scheduling can begin to contribute to the sense of togetherness and mutual dependence.

The first decision the group will make concerns frequency and duration of the sessions. Of course, they are at that particular meeting at that particular time because they indicated in their individual interview that that was one of their possible times for attending. However, the actual decision needs to be confirmed after the students have met and discussed anything that may have come up since their interviews. Concurrently, they will be considering the meeting site. It may very well be that the location of the class sessions will have a significant influence on the frequency/duration of the sessions. Accessibility, availability of public transportation, expense, ride-sharing possibilities are all elements to be considered in choosing an acceptable site.

Although the group will be making the final decision on frequency and duration of meetings, its choice will essentially be one of ratifying a selection suggested by the tutor. Of course, that suggestion is made by weighing the comments of all the group's members. You are the expert and the members will look to you for guidance. There are no hard and fast rules but experience has shown that two sessions per week, each of two hours duration, is an effective pattern. Anything less is ineffective; anything more is burdensome. Some people who have tried once-a-week meetings have found that student retention suffers and interest wanes.

As the group considers how long each class meeting should be, remember that travel time needs to be added to class time in thinking of overall commitment to each session.

After several weeks of following the initial schedule the group may decide to evaluate its appropriateness. There is no reason you cannot change the schedule **if the group wants to do so.**

Confirm Site

The suggestions made earlier about site selection assumed that you have the luxury of choosing from several possibilities. This may not be true. The physical characteristics required of your meeting place may narrow your choices.

There are two types of meeting places you should avoid if at all possible. Do not meet in someone's home, yours or a participant's. "Neutral" locations are much better. Secondly, avoid meeting in a typical classroom. Many of your students will have negative associations with traditional school rooms. You may find space in a library, a bank public meeting room, a community room at a mall, a church or a union hall.

The amount and variety of support equipment you will need in your meeting room will, of course, be determined by the nature of your instructional materials. A standing easel pad or a chalkboard is essential.

The room is ready. Your students are ready.

Discuss Goals

(The following discussion of goals is from **Tutor Training Manual, draft edition,** Literacy Volunteers of New York City.)

One of the first activities a tutor can plan to do with students is to set goals. This is done to:

- get a sense of where the group will be heading
- learn more about student needs
- make day-to-day lesson planning easier
- provide a measure from which to evaluate how well lessons are going

It is important to involve students in setting goals and planning activities as much as possible to:

- get students actively involved in deciding what to learn
- encourage students' input about their needs and interests
- prepare students for becoming independent.

Procedures for Goal Setting

1. The tutor elicits information about the students' needs and interests through open-ended questions such as:

What are some reasons why you would like to improve your reading and writing?

The tutor may need to ask these additional questions if students are not clear about their goals initially.

- Tell me about the kinds of things that interest you.
- Tell me about the kind of work you do.
- Tell me about the kind of work you would like to do.
- What would you like to be able to read and write – at home, at work – or in your neighborhood?

2. The tutor lists all of the goals and interests for each of the students he/she is working with. The tutor has students read through the list of goals and write it in their notebooks. Example: Tutor lists the group's responses on a flip chart.

Goals:

- to fill out job applications
- to read the Bible
- to read everything better
- to get a better job

Initially, it's common for some students to have trouble thinking of a goal or to say, "I just want to learn to read better."

The tutor should continue to explore their interests and needs. Some students will be able to identify an interest after some additional questioning. For others, the tutor will need to spend more time learning about the students.

3. The tutor has students choose one goal that they would like to work on. She describes several alternative ways the group could work on their goals.

- we could spend a limited amount of time on each person's goal – perhaps several lessons on job applications, some time reading Bible stories, and we could then decide where to go from there.
- we could work on a common interest together – such as reading a novel or biography and also work on specific personal goals individually.

It's important for the tutor to suggest ways he/she can help students with their individual goals, particularly if students have immediate needs such as reading medicine labels, or writing telephone messages on the job.

There are a number of different ways of doing this. A tutor may suggest to students that they work on everyone's goals from time to time or that they choose a group goal and work on individual goals in conferences with the tutor. Students can also be grouped so that those who share similar interests can work together.

4. Once a goal is agreed upon, the tutor involves students in thinking about what they will need to do to reach this goal. She lists students' suggestions. These will become activities the tutor and students can begin to work on to accomplish their goals.

Example: Goal: to fill out job applications.

Activities:
- Find out where to get applications
- Bring applications to class
- Write out information

The tutor and students now have a list of activities that they can begin to work on in their lessons together. The list can be referred to to see how well they are doing in meeting the goal.

Working on Long-Term Goals

Often students will select long-term goals that may take a year or more to reach, such as getting a better job or learning to read the Bible.

For long-term goals, it's necessary for students to narrow the scope of the goal to activities they may realistically accomplish in a reasonable time.

This can be done by having the students brainstorm the tasks they will need to do to reach their long-term goals.

Example: To get a better job

Tasks:
- find out where to find jobs
- choose jobs I want to do
- learn to read want ads

Next, the students should select one task which will become their short-term goal. Finally, they brainstorm the kinds of activities that they can work on with the tutor.

Short-term goal: Choose jobs I want to do

Activities:
- figure out what I'm good at
- find out about jobs I think I want
- read about different kinds of jobs

Again, all through this segment make repeated use of each person's name, establishing identities and fixing names in everyone's mind. There is a dual purpose in this discussion of goals and interests. It helps people "open up" since they are each talking about a subject in which they are the expert – their own lives. Also, it gives you good leads as to which instructional mater-

ials and devices can be used to appeal specifically to each student.

It is very important that learning take place in this first session. It must not be just a social gathering or a get acquainted meeting. At this first session, as with every subsequent class, the participants must leave with a sense of accomplishment. A good way to start (not the only way) is to select one of the students' introductions or statement of goals and interests and to develop it as a Language Experience Story.

Tuckman's Model of Group Process

Stages	Characteristics	Tutor's Role	Issues
1. Forming	Getting Acquainted Tentative Behavior "What's in it for me?" Testing "Will I fit in?"	**Leader** "Carries the Ball" Clearly Delineates Objectives & Expectations Encouraging Accepting of "Teacher" Focus Supporting Interpersonal Relationships	Dependence Fear of Unknown Trust Looking for Authority Figure Need for security
2. Storming	Conflict Frustration Expressions of Emotion Growing independence of individual group members Volatile Increase in student-to-student interactions	**Conflict Manager** Acceptance of the importance of conflict Support Encouragement Attention to Student's concerns	Challenge to Leadership Need to Belong Need for social interaction Need to assert individuality
3. Norming	Cooperation Team Spirit Expressions of opinions Group Unity Shared Responsibility Group Decision Making	**Guider** Promoting democratic procedures Enabling people to take on leadership	Group cohesion
4. Performing	Productivity Problem-solving Interdependence Maturity	**Resource** Minimum supervision Occasional reinforcement for outstanding achievement Facilitator	Participatory Democracy Team work Getting the job done
5. Adjourning	Re-emergence of earlier issue Sadness Celebratory	**Facilitator** Celebrator Sometimes a Guider Acceptance of feelings	Resistance to ending Grieving Affirming the Group's Achievements Closure

Chapter Three: Group Dynamics

By Beth Broadway

Groups, in the ideal, provide a safe, stimulating environment for learning to take place. Developing a group into a creative, working team does much to foster the acquisition of reading skills. This chapter focuses on how group members learn to work together, thus providing this supportive environment. The group development process and the various leadership styles that facilitate that process are examined and examples of group interactions at various stages of development are given.

In 1965, B.W. Tuckman completed a study of fifty research studies that examined group behavior. From this he devised a model of group development which is sequential both in terms of task accomplishment and interpersonal relationships. Tuckman's model identified four distinct stages:

forming
storming
norming
performing

In 1977, Tuckman and M.A.C. Jensen updated the original study and included a fifth stage, "adjourning", which focuses on the termination of the group.

In Tuckman's model for group development, the stages follow each other. The issues and concerns presented in one stage must be resolved in order for the group to move on to the next stage. If the issues are unresolved, apathy and conflict result. The group is unable to move forward and eventually will break up. Successful groups are able to meet the challenges that occur at each stage, thereby leading to individual and group growth. Also, while the stages are sequential, they do overlap and individuals might not all be at the same stage as the transition is made from one stage to another.

A note of caution: stage theories are useful only to the extent they provide a guideline by which development can be assessed. Factors, such as the entrance of a new group member, the tutor's leadership style, or personal crisis of individual group members, can affect, indeed wreak havoc, on the smooth transition of the group from stage to stage. Tutors can use the Tuckman model as a tool to help them understand their small groups' problems and growth.

An examination of the stages of group development follow, including the specific issues that arise in each of the stages. Suggested leadership styles to facilitate the group members' growth toward self-direction are included. However, every group will be unique and the vignettes offered as examples demonstrate only one way a particular group might act at any given stage.

Forming

The initial stage of a group's development is the orientation to its purpose and procedures. Students feel free to express their own ideas when they have a sense of what is expected of them. Until they know what's expected, behavior is often tentative, responses to questions are terse and unsure.

Remember, initially the group is a collection of individuals. Each person brings with him or her a set of experiences which have shaped them to act in certain ways in groups. These sets of behaviors may or may not be compatible. Only later are acceptable behaviors for the whole group agreed upon and adhered to.

Just about the only things that people have in common at this early stage are 1) their lack of knowledge about what will happen in this group, and 2) a desire to be successful. Individually, people do not know what to expect, how they can contribute, and how they can benefit from the contributions of the other group members.

In the early forming stage, the tutor and students may not feel like a group, because much of the learning is being done on an individual basis. Quite naturally, the students turn to the tutor for direction, approval, and support.

Tutor's Role in The Forming Stage

The tutor takes an active role as leader at this stage of the group's development (identifying goals, setting lesson plans, planning the sessions, etc.). The tutor is more directive in the forming stage than at any other time during the life of the group. It's essential that the tutor facilitate the process of getting acquainted (see Chapter Two for suggestions and examples of ice breaker activities). It can take months before group members trust one another enough to express true feelings.

The tutor may find it necessary to supervise individuals carefully at this stage. This needs to change as the group matures. The tutor's attention to detail in the forming stage provides the sense of security that allows the students to take risks. Learning to trust is crucial if learning to read is to take place.

During this stage, the students will demonstrate a high degree of dependence on the tutor. Relationships among the students may be tentative or non-existent. It's important to accept this as part of the formative nature of the group. Interdependence will develop later, with encouragement.

Let's take a look at a group of students and a tutor as they form:

The Steel Works closed, and these three men in this community found themselves without jobs. Up to this point in their lives, they had no reason to need better reading skills. Now, however, they must seek new employment, and have sought help from LVA to improve their reading abilities.

The students are Joe, 37; Marty, 32; Pete, 46. The tutor, Tom, is 65 years old. The group has assembled at the Legion hall at 7 p.m.

TOM: Why don't we get started? Everybody pull up a chair around this table. My name is Tom Bishop, and I'll be your tutor. I think it's a good idea if we get to know a little bit about each other. I'll go first.

(The tutor models the behavior)

Again, my name is Tom Bishop. I've lived in Brewster most of my life. I just retired from the city Water Works. I'm married (to the same woman for 40 years!) and my kids have grown up and moved away. For the first time in my life I have time to do volunteer work, and I've always loved reading. So that's why I became an LVA tutor. OK, who wants to go next? Give us your name and tell us a little about yourself.

JOE: I'll go. My name is Joe Higgins. I've got two children. I've lived in Brewster all my life. I worked at the mill until it closed.

TOM: Thanks. Who's next? Marty? Good!

MARTY: I'm Marty D'Angelo. I'm single. I worked at the mill, too. Matter of fact, I've seen you in the parking lot, Joe.

TOM: Thanks, Marty. It's up to you, Pete.

PETE: Well, last but not least. I'm Pete Mercer. And I don't mind telling you I'm nervous about this reading stuff. My job at the mill never required much reading. I'm 46 years old, got a wife and four kids, and now I'm out of a job. I don't know what I'm going to do. (long pause).

TOM: Yes, it must be really hard for you, Pete. Thanks. We'll have lots of opportunities to get to know each other better.

Now, we've got a few things to discuss tonight. When you signed up for tutoring, did you understand that we're going to meet two nights a week?

JOE: Yes. (The other two nod their heads yes)

TOM: We can meet here at the Legion hall Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Does that still work out?

PETE: It's OK with me but if we could meet during the day it would be better.

JOE: I can't meet during the day because I do painting jobs.

MARTY: It's OK with me.

TOM: Well, let's try evenings for a while and see how it goes. There are a couple of other things we need right off the bat. First of all, I know that it's taken a lot of courage for you to ask for reading help. I really hope I can be of help to you. It will take a lot of hard work on our Tuesday and Thursday sessions and what we can do on our own. I can promise you that I'll prepare for our lessons, and I would ask that you do the same. Remember, when kids are learning to read, they are in school 5 days a week and 7 hours a day. We don't have that kind of time together. But you can make the work go a lot faster by doing reading activities on your own. I'll be giving you work to do at home, and it's important that you try to get it done.

Here's my phone number. (hands each one his number). If you have to miss a session, it is important that you call me ahead of time. I'll do the same if I have to miss. Any questions so far?

(Silence)

TOM: OK, then. I thought we might start off by talking about the mill closing . . .

The lesson proceeds.

Tom is taking a very active role in getting the men to open up. He calls on each one, and comments or thanks them for their contribution. He is directive about the place and time of the meetings. Further, he clearly laid out the expectations for the group.

The students basically responded only when called on, and were brief in their replies. Pete opened up a little in sharing fears about losing his job and not knowing how to read. The tutor affirmed that feeling, and gave an indication to the group that it's okay to express your feelings. This is an important function of the tutor at this point.

A good indication that the group is moving into the next stage, **storming,** occurs when the group members begin to express some dissatisfaction. This may come in the form of negative feelings towards the tutor or another student, or dissatisfaction with their reading progress.

Storming

At this stage group members express emotion and sometimes disagree on issues. It is a critical stage in a group's development because the way the disagreement or conflict is managed determines the group's success.

The process of storming involves passage from the dependence of the forming stage to a growing independence and resistance to the formal leadership. Students begin to challenge the tutor and other group members, sometimes subtly, sometimes not so subtly.

Tutor's Role in Storming Stage

One of the most important things the tutor must keep in mind is that the conflict that is occurring is normal, healthy, and necessary if the group is to progress. The **manner** in which the conflict is **handled,** not the elimination of conflict, is of importance.

The tutor's role as directive leader begins to change. The conflict and vying for leadership among the student members is a clear indication that they are ready and able to take on more of a leadership role themselves. The tutor will notice a higher level of interaction among the students and a decrease in student-to-tutor, tutor-to-student interactions. The tutor may have to deal with his or her own desire to be in total control, but must give up the role of directive leader or group development will suffer. The tutor provides direction and structure for lessons, but

more effort is placed on clarifying and explaining the rationale behind the reading tasks. As students get the message (through the tutor's encouragement, attention, and support for their point of view) that their abilities and their willingness to take on leadership are encouraged, there will be less resistance to the tutor's leadership.

Responding to Feelings

One way to aid the students in feeling comfortable in the tutoring relationship is to acknowledge the feelings they express. Often a student - or anyone else for that matter - will be glad to know that what they say has been heard accurately by the tutor. Responding verbally is one way of doing this.

Many of us, in an attempt to create a positive atmosphere during the lesson, will tend to deny feelings and be overly encouraging. For example, a student might say, "I feel embarrassed that I can't read around my family." An inappropriate response would deny the feeling the student is expressing - "you shouldn't feel that way - you'll be able to read soon." An appropriate response might be, "You're feeling discouraged about not being able to read."

Below are some examples of statements made by students. Try to design a response that captures the feeling they're expressing in the statement.

1. Student: I thought I would never be able to let anyone know I can't read. (said enthusiastically)

Tutor: You're feeling proud that it's not so difficult to let others know.

2. Student: I don't think I can ever read that book.

Tutor: You're feeling discouraged because the books you want to read still seem difficult.

3. Student: I thought I was the only person here who couldn't read.

Tutor: You sound surprised there are others in your situation.

"Responding to Feelings" adapted from **Tutor Training Manual**, Literacy Volunteers of New York City, 1983.

As storming takes place, "I really don't want to do another language experience story." or "This lesson doesn't make sense," may be heard. There is a point where members get frustrated and impatient because they don't feel they are getting anywhere as a group, or they may not feel they are succeeding as productive group members.

PETE: Before we start, I've got to tell you that we can't meet on Thursday nights any more.

JOE: Listen to the big boss! We can't meet on Thursday nights! How come?

PETE: I've got a job at the bowling alley Thursday nights 7 to 11 p.m.

MARTY: Hey, look - I've passed up a lot of things to be here Thursdays!

PETE: But I need the money - you know that! We're either going to have to change the night or you can get along without me.

JOE: We can do that too. You're just breaking us up because you got a better deal!

MARTY: Wait a minute! It's November now and I'm not getting many painting jobs. Could we meet Thursday mornings maybe?

JOE: I could do that . . . but I don't know why the rest of us should change just to suit Pete.

MARTY: Hey, we've got a good thing going! If we can get the hall Thursday mornings, let's give it a try.

TOM: I'll find out and get back to you by tomorrow night. Now, how did you do on your homework?

JOE: I can't read much of my homework. Who cares about Marty's trip to Boston, anyway?

MARTY: You helped write the story, and we read it together in class. I bet you never even tried to read it at home.

PETE: I had trouble with it, too. I found it boring. I don't ever expect to get to Boston. I missed 4 or 5 words. But I suppose we'd better read it again.

JOE: What's this word?

TOM: Railroad.

JOE: OK. But why can't we learn words we'll use? Nobody rides trains anymore.

PETE: Come off it, Joe! Haven't you ever come up to a railroad crossing? You're just goofing off and that holds us all up. You couldn't have spent much time on your homework.

MARTY: You said you were going to the races at Milton. Bet you didn't do your homework there!

JOE: No, but I won six dollars! Love those races! I'd go every night if I could.

MARTY: I had my shot at Boston for the last story. Start off another one, Joe, with "I love the races."

This was a double-edged conflict - anger at Pete for his bossiness and irritation at Joe for not pulling his weight in the learning process. There was also the suggestion that the subject matter wasn't relevant to most of their lives. The tutor made no reproaches. He left it to the group to speak of their displeasure. As it was, the group decided on the topic for the next Experience activities.

The group's leadership (the tutor) is challenged. Some group members begin to assert their own leadership, while others become passive and unwilling to participate in either the conflict or the task of reading.

Norming

The third stage in this model of group development is norming. This stage is characterized by a growing sense of cooperation among the group members. There are still conflicts, but arrival at the norming stage presupposes that the group has learned how to handle its internal conflicts.

As the title of this stage suggests, there are certain "norms" in place within the group. Obvious norms, such as whether or not it's all right to smoke during the lesson, or the importance (or the lack thereof) of being on time, are usually followed by all members. Less observable norms, like the kind of humor that's used between group

members, or how someone "gets the floor" to speak, are also established. There is more expression of opinion and a greater sense of group unity. The individual personalities of each of the group members, including the tutor, emerge and are appreciated more freely. Group decision making is increasingly evident, and there is less dependence on the tutor for guidance. Shared responsibility for the development of the group is in evidence on the part of all group members. It would not be uncommon for the students to begin calling one another outside the tutoring sessions. They also might begin to hold one another accountable for missing a lesson or not completing homework.

Tutor's Role in Norming Stage

The tutor has a very demanding job at this stage. There is a balance to be struck between the group member's taking over some leadership functions – presenting, explaining, summarizing, suggesting topics and reading materials – and the tutor retaining enough leadership functions so that the group won't get bogged down in frustration and failure. The process of distributing leadership and accepting comfortable norms is extremely important and must be facilitated by the tutor. The group feeling that has emerged supports the developing sense of trust among its members, including the tutor. This facilitates the openness necessary to self-directed learning.

At this stage, group members are likely to enforce "norms" or standards. Group members who don't conform are likely to be squelched. This can have both a positive and a negative effect on the group. On the positive side, the group "takes care" of itself. For example, if one group member interrupts another, and the norm is to hear one another out, the other group members may say "Hey, you cut him off. Let him finish what he was saying."

On the other hand, the concept of norming can get carried to a negative extreme. In order to avoid conflicts and to maintain the emerging sense of unity, people act as if every group member were exactly alike. There is an unspoken credo that says, "Everyone in this group has exactly the same abilities and responsibilities. We must all act the same and have 100% agreement on everything before we can proceed." This attitude can squelch individual creativity and contributions. For example, a statement such as "Hey, we've all finished Book Two, and we like the series. Let's go on to Book Three, OK?" Perhaps one member hasn't finished Book Two and isn't ready for Book Three. It's also possible that this member would rather work on a driver's manual. The tutor should be alert to this possibility and encourage a group decision which accommodates individual needs.

The tutor will also notice an increased desire for action on the part of the group. The strong group pressure and warm feelings make it possible for the group to accomplish a good deal. Because there is a surge of productivity as never before, the tutor's tendency might be to push very hard on reading tasks. The tutor must be careful to avoid slipping back into a directive leadership role. Shared leadership will draw this group forward into maturity and productivity in the reading task.

A group at this stage offers a great deal of satisfaction to its members. In the forming and storming stages, group members try to help the group grow in order to overcome their own frustrations. However, in norming, the group sense promotes the feeling that "together we can move mountains." The frustrations at this stage are the result of **wanting** to work more effectively. People are freed, rather than pushed, to develop better ways to work together.

All of the work to this point has, in a very real sense, prepared the group for the next stage, **performing.** People have developed their relationships with each other enough to trust and to know that their ideas and emotions will be accepted, and they are free to work on the task of reading. In the process, the group finds topics and carries out discussions which are interesting and satisfying for everyone.

Some of the roles that the group members we have been observing were assuming are beginning to become apparent. Marty does a lot of "bridge-building", helping people stay invested in the group. Pete likes to bring people back to the task, and "tells it like it is."

These roles began developing the moment the group first came together. Now we have a chance to view the group in their fourth month of work together. They have established some expected behaviors for group interaction.

MARTY: Hey, Joe, are your kids over the measles yet?

JOE: Yeah, thank God! My wife was going crazy trying to keep them quiet! I want to tell you guys, it's been tough to do my homework with all that going on in the house. But I did do what I could.

PETE: Sure, Joe. It's a better excuse than you used to have. (winks at Marty, and jabs Joe with his elbow. They all laugh.)

TOM: Last week, we said we were going to work on filling out sample job applications, and you asked me to get some forms. I brought a few and I wonder if that's where we should start tonight?

PETE: Yeah, that's what I'd like to do, but let's not go over the stuff we all know already. Let's each take a look at the forms and circle the words we have trouble with, like we did on that newspaper story you gave us a few weeks ago.

TOM: How does that sound to you and Marty?

JOE: Yeah, that's a good way to do it.

Marty nods, and they all settle in with three samples each. After they've worked on the common words that all had trouble reading, they make up word cards and drill each other on the words that were specific to one individual.

Towards the end of the session, Pete brings up a concern:

PETE: Listen, I was talking to a friend of mine who doesn't read real well, and I was telling him about our group

here. He's interested in joining in with us, and I wondered if it was okay if I invited him to start coming to sessions with us.

JOE: No way! It would be too hard to start somebody new. Besides, what if he wasn't as good at reading as us? He'd slow us down.

MARTY: Well, I don't think we should rule it out altogether, Joe. I mean, look at what we're all getting from being able to read better. We should probably think about bringing Pete's friend in. But I'm not sure it's the best thing to do. What do you think, Tom?

TOM: I think we ought to look at all sides of this. It would mean some time in helping us get acquainted with Pete's friend and for him to get comfortable with us. Also, he'll need to take the READ test like you guys did to see where his reading level is. We have made a year's commitment to each other, and we're four months into it now, so it's really not too late to open the group up if you're all in agreement.

JOE: Geeze, Tom, yes or no would have done! I don't know. I guess I like the group the way it is. A newcomer might mess things up. But if this guy takes the test, and he's pretty close to us in level, maybe it'd work.

PETE: Look, I made him no promises. If you'd rather stick with the four of us, maybe there's another group he could get involved in. What about it, Tom? Do they have other groups?

TOM: I'm sure they do, but the best thing for your friend to do would be to go down to the program office and sign up. He'll be given the READ test, and if there's another group that is forming, he might consider that. I could also tell them that we'd consider having him in our group.

MARTY: Okay, Tom, why don't you let'em know that we'll consider him for our group if his test is close enough to us. And Pete, you get him down to the affiliate office to sign up.

PETE: That sounds good. Well, good night, you guys.

As we look at this dialogue, we see there is good-natured teasing at the beginning of the session. There is a sense that the group members genuinely care about each other. As the session progresses, the students take responsibility for determining how to use the materials that the tutor provided. They use the sight word techniques with one another, and do not depend on the tutor to direct the lesson.

The way the group approached the notion of a new member is very typical of the norming stage. The "group sense" is high, and Joe expressed it well for the group when he said he didn't want things to get messed up. There is a tendency on the part of the group to want to stay within itself. It has become like a family. The introduction of a new member would mean reverting back to an earlier stage of development until the new member was assimilated into the group. However, there is a growing maturity, as they all considered the proposal in a reasonable way and turned to the tutor for advice on the logistics of it.

If they decide to add a new member, it would be at this point that the group members, tutor included, would discuss the ramifications of such action and how they might best make the transition comfortable for the new member. Note that this group perceives itself as homogeneous in reading level. It might not be. It is typical of the norming stage that group members see themselves as more similar than they actually might be. This group is of course quite homogenous as to gender and work background. It would be difficult to add someone to this type of group unless he matched the others closely. In any case, the decision needs to be a group one.

Performing

The performing stage is characterized by productivity and maturity. People are more accepting of the individual differences. When topics are raised for discussion, they are accepted or rejected on their own merits. The process of learning to read and planning for lessons become the responsibility of all group members. When plans are made, useful suggestions for carrying them out are given by many members. Plans are tested through discussion, and reading materials and lessons have more relevance to real life situations.

People can relax in the group at this stage. The emotional energy that was once invested in getting acquainted, and vying for control, is channeled towards cooperative group efforts. There is less need for individuals to get attention because there is an awareness that, in due time, each will get his turn to discuss concerns. Listening skills have developed and "normed", therefore, members know that everyone will make an effort to understand each others' feelings and needs. Personal crises and problems will no longer throw the group into confusion. The group will have the flexibility to interrupt its reading work to deal with individual worries, with the knowledge that this is a temporary state that will not ultimately disrupt the group's progress. Group members are beginning to look at themselves objectively. Although it's not easy to see oneself through another's eyes, it can be accomplished in part in a supportive atmosphere.

There is a real sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as the task of learning to read becomes more and more a reality. The reading group helps each to read, but also provides members with a deeper understanding of self.

Tutor's Role in Performing

The members of a mature group no longer need the task-directive nor the emotionally supportive role of the tutor that had been evident at an earlier stage. The group members are competent, confident in their roles and abilities, and exhibit a high degree of motivation. In a mature group, many leadership functions are assumed by group members. This includes gathering and pre-

senting information, choosing reading materials, identifying specific topics common to all group members, summarizing the progress of a lesson. This allows the tutor the freedom to behave more like other members, contributing and sharing when needed, holding back when other members have a contribution. Tutor interventions may even be seen as interference, or evidence that the tutor doesn't trust the group.

The major role a tutor assumes in the mature group is that of resource (connections with other agencies, materials and technical information.) Open channels of communication should be maintained so that the resource function can be fully utilized.

Occasionally, the tutor may provide reinforcement for outstanding achievements of the group as a whole as well as individual members. (Other group members may do this as well.) Celebrations are an important part of this stage, and the tutor can help facilitate this recognition.

This is a very rewarding stage for the tutor, as great strides are made in reading progress. The tutor can reap the benefits of many months of work and can enjoy, in a relaxed way, the job of helping the group members enhance their reading abilities.

It's now the ninth month of the group's life, and as is typical of a group that has progressed well with its democratic leadership style, they have achieved a level of maturity that allows them to see each other as well as the tutor as resources.

Pete's friend decided not to join the group, after all, so the group has remained intact with the four members.

TOM: I have to tell you something. I am so pleased with how this group is working out. The progress you are making is really great.

MARTY: I feel the same way, Tom. I've been able to do a lot more as a result of learning how to read.

JOE: Hey, what is this? Mush time?

PETE: (smiling) Well, yeah, Joe, it is. I have good news! I have a job interview next week with Jonas Construction company. I turned in my application last week, and I got a call yesterday.

JOE: Hey, that's great, Pete. Is there something we can do during this lesson to help you get ready for it?

PETE: Yes, as a matter of fact, there is. There are a lot of terms used in the construction business that I don't know. I was hoping we could work on these. I brought a couple of books along that we can use.

The lesson proceeds, with the group using flash cards to drill Pete in terms, and then Pete and Marty do a role play of what it will be like to be interviewed.

It's obvious that there is a high level of productivity and genuine affection in the group. Each member has their own way of expressing this caring, from openly sharing feelings as in Tom's case, to joking, but also offering to turn the session over to Pete's needs, as in Joe's case.

Tom has obviously done his job in adjusting his leadership style to the needs of the group. The group members all feel comfortable in bringing in materials that are relevant to them, and to ask the group for assistance.

Adjourning

Eventually the group must come to an end. Adjourning should not be done abruptly but rather should allow time for affirmations, sadness at parting, and for closure. This stage is characterized by a reemergence of some of the earlier issues, such as apathy, conflict, or dependence. This is normal and natural as the group members come to terms with the ending of the group. Crises almost always throw the group back to earlier stages, and adjournment, even though it is anticipated, is a minor crisis for the group.

Tutor's Role in Adjourning

The tutor can most effectively help this group by encouraging an acceptance of the grieving and affirming the group through celebrations and affirmations. The tutor may take a more active role, particularly as a "guider" as in the "norming" stage. Helping people express their sadness at leaving the group and their fear about not having the security of the group is important. It is necessary for the tutor to point out to the group that these feelings are to be expected. The tutor will want to guide the group towards celebrating its greatness. Perhaps each student can be highlighted for one lesson with stories or poems or presentations written and read by fellow group members.

The group we've been following is, as stated earlier, a very homogeneous group. Therefore, it is likely that they would be ready for adjournment at the same time. Members of more heterogeneous groups would be unlikely to be ready to move on to the next stage at the same time. The tutor would then need to discuss with each member of the group their options: to go into a new group, to open the group to new members who would replace those moving on to new situations, to go to more advanced Adult Basic Education classes, or to discontinue lessons having reached intitial goals.

This is the last month of the group we've been following. A year has almost gone by, and Tom wants to gradually help the group come to a close. Each of the members has accomplished some of their goals, and although Tom is willing to continue to work with them, he realizes that they are ready to go into more advanced study.

TOM: I thought I'd better mention that we only have seven more sessions together, and then our one year commitment is up.

JOE: Well, we don't have to stop just because the year is over. I mean, that was a minimum, right?

MARTY: Yeah, it was a minimum. We could keep going. Even though you suggested that we go for our Adult Basic Education now, Tom, I'm not so sure I could learn with somebody else. How about if we renegotiate for another year?

PETE: Well, I'm not so sure we really need another year. Besides, Tom would probably like a break from us. Right, Tom?

TOM: (smiles) No, not necessarily. But I do realize that all

three of you are ready to move on to the Adult Basic Education program, and I believe you can do it.

JOE: Well, I can't do it. Just the other day, I got my insurance policy, and I couldn't figure out any of it. I know I need to keep working.

MARTY: Come on, Joe. NO ONE can read an insurance policy. They aren't meant for normal people.

TOM: I have a feeling that if you really put your mind to it, you'd not only be able to get through the Adult Basic Education classes but you'd also be able to get your high school equivalency diplomas. I wouldn't be surprised if you became tutors yourselves, some day.

This kind of back and forth feeling, of wanting to stay with the group and then wanting to go forward, is common to most groups who are beginning to end. Joe, Pete, Marty, and Tom have developed a real bond of caring, and that will not stop, even when the group stops. It will take this group the next couple of sessions to come to terms with their departure, and with the implementation of their next goals, such as setting up a time to start Adult Basic Education classes. The group can be used to help each of the members prepare for their next life goal.

The last session was not held at the Legion hall. These four men decided to take themselves out for a steak dinner and have a real "graduation."

A Reminder About Leadership Style

If the tutor's leadership style is mismatched with the group's stage of develpment, serious problems can occur. Most people are comfortable with a particular style of leadership and have developed their skills in only these ways. Adherence to a particular style of leadership will limit the tutor's effectiveness and the group's chance for success.

For this reason, the tutor willing to examine his or her leadership styles and to adjust to the needs of the group will provide a much more positive group experience and will increase the probability of the students improving their reading.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Materials

The material in this chapter is based on TUTOR, (Colvin, Root, 1984); TUTOR TRAINING MANUAL, DRAFT VERSION, LVNYC, (Griswold, 1983) and Ruth J. Colvin's experience in group tutoring. Colvin is chair of LVA's national Research and Development Committee as well as having been a tutor for over 20 years.

One of the major challenges of a group tutoring assignment is developing a variety of teaching aids.

The same guide to selection of materials that is used in one-to-one tutoring is still appropriate when choosing aids for a group. The materials must be appropriate for adults; no children's books should be used unless specifically chosen by a student. The subject matter must be provocative in order to generate discussion and it should be imaginative so as to create interest on the part of the reader. Yet lessons should be individualized for each student.

The small group tutor has a greater number of responsibilities than does a one-to-one tutor. These come from several sources. First there is the requirement of having sets of materials that are designed for group use and for individual use. Second, each teaching aid should be available in multiple copies so that each student can have his or her own.

Because of the number of variables that will exist from one group to another, it is not possible to try to recommend a specific sequence of exercises to be followed. Considering the special circumstances that apply to the group and its individual members, the tutor often will have to create his/her own materials as required.

Language Experience Group Story

A practical group activity for an early lesson could be a "Group Story." This is an adaptation of an individual experience story.

In language experience a student relates in his or her own words, an experience, a hope, or a concern. The tutor writes the student's words and then teaches him or her to read those words.

For a group story with a group in the forming stage of development, begin by asking for topics. You could do this by suggesting topics and noting the group's reactions. Modify your suggestions accordingly. As the group moves into more advanced stages of development, they will be able to identify topics for group stories arising out of their informal discussions as they arrive for class. In any case, encourage the group members to discuss the topics and either to vote or to arrive at a consensus as to which topic they will write about. One of the early group stories Ruth Colvin's group wrote dealt with buying a transistor radio. Once the topic was settled on, they proceeded as follows:

First, Ruth wrote the title on the chalkboard (or you could use an easel pad), reiterating that it was **their** story they were writing. She asked them what they wanted to say about the topic. You may find that you have to insist they tell you, even though it might mean waiting out silent periods, paraphrasing their words, or even asking specific individuals to discuss the topic. The discussion may evolve in the following way:

It s very important to have a transistor radio these days. You can carry it with you. You can get the news. But most important you can get the music you like.

"The cost isn't always high. Look around the discount stores and watch for sales. You can get a good bargain."

Once the sentence is written on the board, list the ideas and comments from the group. When you have four or five comments, read through them. Discuss which comments go together (cost, uses, where to buy). These could be ways of grouping the content. Then ask for someone to suggest where to begin the story. Let them develop the ordering of the comments into a story in any form they think makes sense. If you can get a discussion going pertaining to the logic of the story, so much the better. Teach the Group Story in the same way as an individual Experience Story, with slight adaptations.

The following is a suggested method:

1. Read the entire story aloud, pointing to each word as it is read.

2. Read the first sentence aloud, again pointing to each word.

3. Ask the students to read together that first sentence as you point to the words.

4. Repeat #3 as often as necessary for the students to feel comfortable with reading that sentence by sight.

5. Read aloud each succeeding sentence, one at a time while pointing to the words.

6. Ask the students to read aloud together succeeding sentences as the tutor points to the words.

7. Read the entire story aloud once more, giving correct phrasing.

8. Ask the students to read the entire story aloud together.

9. Suggest that the students read the story silently. Tell them you will pronounce any words they do not recognize.

10. Ask individual students to read the entire story aloud.

By this time, the students will feel comfortable reading the story.

Sight Words

Sight Words in Context of Language Experience

Language Experience story can be used to teach sight words. Write individual words from the story on 3 by 5 cards. You could start with the title. Ask the first student which word in the title she would like to learn first. If she selects "transistor", underline the word "transistor" in the story and write it on a quartered 3 by 5 card. Give the card to the student, ask her to look closely at the word, and put it under the word in the title as she reads it. Ask the next student to choose a different word. If "radio" is selected, follow the same procedure as was used for "transistor." Follow the same procedure for words selected by other students in the group.

Now, take all the word cards, mix them up and ask the group to read individual words, always giving them the opportunity to look at the story on the chalkboard or easel. Work on as many sentences and words as appropriate for the group.

Next, ask the students to copy the sight words from the board. We assume your students can write (it doesn't matter if in manuscript or cursive).

The students can take the story home to read to their families as review for homework. You should re-write the story carefully in manuscript, or type it, and give a copy to each student at the next session. Keep the word cards and review them with the students at the next session, adding more words as they progress.

Sight Words From Word Lists

The teaching of sight words from word lists such as "The 300 Most Frequently Used Words" (Colvin, Root, 1984) can be a group activity. First, test to find out specific sight words that each student can't read. Here is one way of testing. This activity will call for prior preparation on your part. Because reading is getting meaning from printed words, use of the context is a part of word recognition. Therefore, using a word list, prepare easy-to-read short sentences (about five words), containing those words. Base the sentence on material discussed in Language Experience activities or on other printed materials you are using in your lessons. Make copies of the list of sentences, giving each student a copy. Have them read the sentences silently, then either have them underline the words they can't read or ask them individually to read the sentence to you, and you build a list of words each needs to know. Put all the sight words missed by each student on separate word cards. And, as a group, go over them. With a small group, you can teach sight words this way:

Ask the first student to read the first word – it may or may not have been one of the words she did not know; thus, she may or may not be able to read it, but it is hers to try first. If she can't read it, ask someone else to read it and use it in a sentence. The first student then reads the word and uses it in a sentence, and places the word in the first pile.

The next student is asked to read the second word card. He gets the first try at it, but if he does not know it, anyone else in the group can respond. When the second student reads the word and uses it in a sentence, he puts the word card in the second pile. Use the same procedure for the remaining two students, making four piles of word cards.

Follow this procedure until each student has a pile of five to ten words. Give each student his/her pile of word cards and ask that they review them on their own.

Bring the group together again, asking each student to read his/her word cards aloud, always using each word in a sentence. Then have the students exchange their word cards with another student. Repeat the process until all four students know all 20 to 40 words. It is review for some students, an introduction for others. It is a good sharing as well as learning experience.

Phonics

Most students at this level will know individual consonants, but texts such as LVA's READ test might quite commonly reveal certain gaps in an adult student's knowledge of names of some letters or the sound associated with particular letters. When teaching the names and sounds represented by individual consonants, have the group decide. Several words might be suggested as key words. Have the group vote; and the majority wins. For the most part, this will be a part of individual instruction. See TUTOR (Colvin, Root, 1984) for details of teaching phonics.

Word Patterns

Teaching word patterns, the vowel-consonant combinations, in a group is similar to teaching word patterns in a OTO situation. You first find out if your students understand rhyming and then proceed to select patterned words from their group story or reading and placing the pattern on the board so that it is lined up, give the first word in the series and then ask for the remaining words to be read (Detailed instruction on individual teaching of Word Patterns in TUTOR, Colvin, Root).

Recognizing words from Word Families

An additional way students can learn to make generalizations about letter-sound relationships is to introduce them to word families. Many words come from a common etymological root. By teaching the "mother" word and related words you can cover a lot of territory. For example, if the student has learned the word "employment" through using it in a language experience passage, you can build on this by teaching "employer", "employee", "employable", "unemployment."

Working with roots and prefixes and suffixes

Other words can be analyzed by identifying its parts when they involve roots and prefixes and suffixes. This is especially helpful when dealing with some multisyllabic words. In this case begin by analyzing a word that the

Some Common Practices to Avoid When Teaching The Decoding Skills of Phonics and Word Patterns

Word recognition is the area of reading about which many tutors and students often have strong feelings and some important misconceptions. This is probably true for several reasons. First, word recognition is often confused with the total reading process and thus correct word recognition is often seen as the best way of demonstrating success. Second, what most people remember about their own experiences learning to read usually has to do with how they were taught to recognize words. And finally, what seems like good common sense about how people learn to read words is not confirmed by reading research. Because of these misconceptions, some tutors and students fall into some not-so-helpful approaches to teaching word recognition. Following are some "Do Nots" to be observed as you teach.

1. Do not keep a score card. Especially when working with a beginning reader, we tend to pay most attention to the words the student can't read.

We count the errors; we write them down. When students read a word correctly, it is a victory; when they make a mistake it is a defeat. Tutors feel this way. So do students. Unfortunately this frame of mind creates a great deal of anxiety for students who make lots of mistakes – not to mention that it thoroughly distorts the reading process and the purpose for reading. **Focus on the word recognition strategies the students are using and think about the ways you can build on their strengths to overcome their weaknesses rather than list mistakes.**

2. Do not stop to correct wrong words. It's tempting to stop in the middle of a sentence and launch into a phonic analysis or to have the student search the page for the place where they read it correctly earlier. Or sometimes we invent a riddle related to the correct word to help the student guess it. All of these practices actually interfere with word recognition, since they interrupt the flow of the student predicting and getting meaning from what they are reading. It also puts students in the position of having to think of many different kinds of things at once – a very confusing situation. **Note and work on problem words and build on words already known after you complete reading and discussion.**

3. Do not always teach the little words first and longer words later. It would seem to make sense that the big words are hard and little words are easy and that the most commonly used small words should be taught first. Actually, supposedly easy little words such as "why", "they", and "on," are some of the hardest words for students to learn. If you concentrate only on these words, your students may end up quite frustrated and may not make much progress. **Work with words that are interesting and important to the student, regardless of length, and words that fall into regular patterns.**

4. Do not break down words. Many students and tutors feel that "breaking down words" into syllables is a helpful technique. Actually this technique will not help students to figure out unknown words. Try this for yourself. How would you pronounce the words "glomerular" or "cacaphony?"

If a student is good at breaking down words, this is a sign that they have become quite skilled at phonic analysis – it is a **result** of their becoming proficient at word recognition rather than a **means** of their becoming proficient. At this stage it becomes a reinforcement of what they already **know. From time to time, "sound out" words having the student note what letters go with what sounds.**

Very little time should be spent on this, and it should be done only with words that students encounter in their reading. Dividing lists of words into syllables is not an appropriate activity for our students.

5. Do not spell out words. Spelling out a word before it is read in most cases interferes with, rather than aids, students in recognizing letter-sound relationships. **Do use sight word and word patterns techniques with these students.**

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student already knows, building up a set of words using the same patterns. For example:

care	careful	careless
hope	hopeful	hopeless

Write To Read – A Way of Learning to Read

Many new readers find they need help in writing. They are embarrassed because they are so unsure of their spelling and punctuation. Expanding the language experience is an excellent way to incorporate writing, **gradually** including spelling and punctuation.

Most students will not write because they are unsure of the spelling of even common words. You can help them by encouraging them to write as they tell experiences stories. Each individual can write his/her own story while still part of the group. Ask each student to pick a subject for their own story and think of a first sentence for it, and then dictate it to you. Explain that each of them will get a chance to work on their own story.

The first may say: "I took my little girl to school this morning."

You write and teach her to read it, exactly as was done in the previous experience story.

Before going on to the second student, ask the first student to supply a second sentence. For example, "She took her lunch with her." Now tell her to write it. Often, the student will say, "But I can't write it – I just can't spell."

Be firm as you encourage the student to write. You might say "'She' is the first word in your sentence.

"'She.' What does 'she' start with? Write the word. Don't worry about spelling. Just write what you think it might be. No one else will see it – give it a try."

Continue this procedure with the remaining students.

When all students have completed their stories or perhaps only added a sentence or two, ask each of them to **read** his or her own story. It is helpful to look over their shoulders as they read. This will help you to decipher their writing. No matter how messy, how poor and unorthodox the spelling, students know what they write and can read it. The reader senses the delight of the entire group.

The content of individual stories is surprisingly interesting often solving questions for the group. But students usually are embarrassed by misspellings and do not want anyone in the group to see their story in the original form. But they want help in spelling; they do want it perfect.

In correcting the spelling, try to keep the students' papers as neat as possible. Don't make big marks to show errors. In fact, write a positive comment at the top of the paper (i.e. "Well written", or "Good choice of words", "You are an observing person")before you even begin to make corrections.

Then examine the paper for spelling errors. Underline the misspelled words and put a number above the word. Then at the bottom of the page, or in the margin, repeat the number and provide the word correctly spelled. Thus, the student can see the correct spelling and it is his/her choice to leave it as it is, or to re-write with correct spelling or just to copy it over with correct spelling.

By providing a model of correct spelling without taking time away from their writing project, you are giving them the chance to ignore worrying about spelling (and mechanics) for a while and to concentrate on what they want to say in their writing. They are learning to look for logical development in their own work and will transfer this skill to their reading of other material.

Tell the students that their first writing is a first draft; they'll have a chance to change and refine it. Once you have provided them with correctly spelled words without making any fuss over it, they can think through their original version and choose to discuss it with others (more likely to happen at the later stages of group development); think about it on their own and rewrite it – adding details, correcting spelling, or leaving out points that do not make sense to them.

As the group progresses through the various stages of development, the members will be more willing to share their writing and thoughts with each other and through appropriate peer work actually assist each other in learning to write to read.

Here is the above process in a step-by-step procedure:

1. Begin with your slowest student. He will then have the most time to work on his story.
2. Start with an experience story in the usual way. Get the student to talk and then write down the first sentence that he wants in his story, teaching him to read his own words.
3. After a second sentence has been decided on and dictated, suggest that the student write it. He will probably hesitate, BUT BE FIRM IN HAVING HIM WRITE EVEN A FEW OF HIS OWN WORDS.
4. If he is hesitant, repeat the sentence or even the first word. Encourage him to write it by asking the name of the first letters in the first word. Getting him to write the first word is the key.
5. Remind the student that the appearance of his writing is not important. You don't care how the words are spelled. You don't care if there are capitals, periods or question marks. You only want him to write.
6. When your student has completed whatever he wants to write – one sentence or several – have him read it aloud. Look at his work as he reads it, to help you decipher the writing. He can read it because he wrote it.
7. Comment positively about the written work and indicate spelling errors with corrections. Do this as your homework between sessions.
8. Underline each word that is misspelled and put a number above it. Be careful not to mark up a student's paper unnecessarily.
9. Write the number and the word spelled correctly in the margin or at the bottom of the paper.
10. Suggest that the student might want to re-write the story. This is his decision.
11. After your student has re-written the story, ask him to read it.
12. Offer to type the story from his corrected sheet.

Sun Day

BY Charles STREATOR

I went To mx Mother

For, Dinner. We had

Seathren Fried Chickin And

Ma[3]Ch Poata[4]da And For

Da[5]sert We had

Cho[6]klit Cake.

I Was Great.

MY Mother is

A Great Cook.

1. Southern
2. chicken
3. mashed
4. potato
5. dessert
6. chocolate

Example of Spelling Corrections on Student's Paper.

Students will write if they know that their original story is only the beginning and that the final story will have no spelling errors and will be typed to resemble other reading material. Their self-confidence is boosted and they often agree not only to write a story for each lesson, but also write in a daily journal.

Journal Writing

Journal writing appeals to many students. Ask them to write at least two sentences a day in a notebook devoted to that purpose. The sentences can be about any topic they want. They could be about what they want to do that day, how they felt about the day, a copy of some saying that appealed to them. The students have the option of sharing their journals with the group or keeping them to themselves. Point out that writing, any kind of writing that they do between sessions is going to help them learn to read. Also, journals provide topics of real, personal interest to students to develop into essays, stories or poems.

Homework assignments can include a request for them to write a story. Most students seem to enjoy reading their stories to the group.

Because these new readers are unable to read well, they often are unaware that they have good ideas which can be written down for themselves and others to read. It's a pleasant surprise when they find their written words are interesting to others. They are surprised by the high quality of their final stories and the praise they receive.

Reading Material Written by Others

It is helpful if you can find one book that will work for the entire small group – that is, a reading book, with questions and guidelines for discussion included. You can assign chapters to be read for homework, or during the session while you are working with others. Allowing each student to have his/her own book, and yet working as a group, gives structure to your work. Because much of the work must be individualized, a group reading book brings the group together.

Sample copies of three or four books might be provided and the students can examine them. Let the students decide which book would be best for the group. The Cambridge Literacy series developed by LVA, consisting of twenty-six individual titles with a **User's Guide** containing suggestions for prediscussion as well as actual study sheets is an excellent series for this purpose. The "suggested resources" at the end of this book will give you other suggestions for series and individual titles to use with adult new readers.

Silent Reading

It is often suggested that adult reading students be given material that is below their reading level. This has many advantages, including the confidence it gives new readers, and the ability to read right along without stumbling, allowing for comprehension not just "word calling". This is a good practice and should be continued. However, there are times when we want to **challenge** new readers to encourage them to push ahead, to let them know that they are capable of reading and understanding more than they think they can.

The following is an experience which Ruth Colvin had with her students.

"Both Donnie and Janice, in my small group, had improved their reading. I felt they were "ready". I was leaving on an extended trip, and I was trying to prepare them for more independent work. They read at perhaps the 4th grade level. I looked for material at the fifth or sixth grade reading level. It could have even been more difficult, but the subject matter had to be interesting and sufficiently tantalizing for them to want to read on. I got Reader's Digest version of **Jonathan Livingston Seagull** and gave each of them a copy. They looked at it and immediately said that it looked too difficult.

"I suggested that they read the first two pages **silently.** Afterwards, I'd ask them to tell us what they'd read. Almost immediately, Donnie asked what one word was – he couldn't sound it out, he didn't know it by sight, and it didn't look like any pattern he'd had. I asked him just to skip it, read along and I thought he'd get the idea.

"Shortly, Janice asked what one word was. I gave her an answer similar to the one I had given Donnie. After several attempts to get the words from me, they shrugged their shoulders and continued reading.

"When they both looked up, finished, I asked them what they'd read. Speaking sometimes together, sometimes alternately, they told me what the story was about. That's when I explained – even though they couldn't read **every** word, they got the idea – they "skimmed" and understood.

"This was a revelation to them. We talked about it. It had proved to them that they could read **more** than they thought they could.

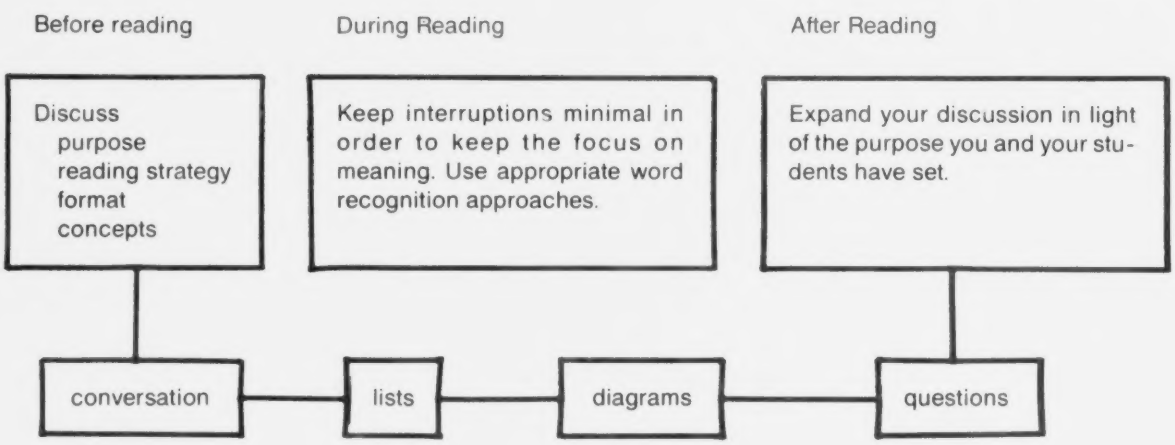
"We continued – I read part of the story aloud to them (I wanted to be sure they saw reading for enjoyment too) – and they read part silently. We stopped at a crucial point in the story. I left the books with them and they knew they were free now to read or not to read the rest of **Jonathan Livingston Seagull.**

"We, as tutors, must know when to give reading material below a reader's level and when to challenge them with reading material beyond their level.

"Charles, a third member of my small group, reads at the first grade reading level. We're still working to build up his self confidence. An experience like the **Jonathan Livingston Seagull** silent reading activity would have been disastrous to him.

"I suggest that silent reading of material which challenges students to stretch, (being sure that the material is of high interest) is another element of reading that we shouldn't overlook."

Reading Material Written by Others



Before-Reading Activities

Discuss the **purpose for reading** with your student.

People read for a wide variety of reasons — sometimes to get specific information, other times to get a general sense of what the material is all about. etc.

The purpose for reading will determine **how the material should be read.** Should it be read from cover to cover, as one might read a novel?

Should it be scanned for particular information, as one reads a telephone book?

Should the material be memorized, or is a passing familiarity with the material enough?

Explore the **format of the material** with your students.

Observe graphics and pictures, table of contents, index, size of book or article, etc. What does the format tell you about what to expect?

Discuss the **expected content** of the material with your students. Try to relate what they already know to the new concepts in the material.

During-Reading Activities

Keep interruptions minimal to focus on meaning.

Encourage your students to use **context** and/or phonics **strategies to figure out words.**

Encourage your students to make logical guesses about words by reading ahead to the end of the sentence or beyond.

In silent reading, **supply words that your students can't figure out.**

In oral reading **correct only words that change the meaning,** and these only after your students have had a chance to read ahead to the end of the sentence or beyond.

After-Reading Activities

Discuss the reading in light of the purpose you and your students set out for yourselves initially.

If your students are reading a car repair manual and want to learn how to fix a car engine, they'll need to understand quite specifically how to do it. Here, details and the order to steps are important.

On the other hand, if your students are reading a newspaper article on the frustrations of subway riders in New York City, the details may be less important to remember. In this case, the discussion might focus on the students' own experiences with public transportation and how that relates to the article.

Use the discussion after reading to expand the discussion you started before reading. Use conversations, lists, diagrams, questions (both students and tutor) to enlarge on the concepts discussed before reading.

After-reading activities might come at any point in the text where you and your students want to discuss what has gone on and relate it to your discussion before reading any further.

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Activities For Reading Material Written by Others

In order to understand reading material written by others, the reader must relate what is already known about a subject to the material being read. The **before, during, and after** reading approaches explained here show you how to help your students make the transition from material dictated throught the Language Experience Approach to material written by others.

Spelling

As shown above in Colvin's **Write to Read** section, one way to teach spelling is to have students correct their spelling by copying corrected words in their own writing. But we want to make students independent of us. New adult readers often hesitate to write anything because they are so unsure of spelling. How can you help an adult new reader with spelling? What words do you concentrate on first? And how do you teach spelling?

There are three "word lists" that you could use as a base:

1. Words from the Sight Word List, The 300 Most Frequently Used Words. These are words that students must learn to spell correctly if they want to write even at a basic practical level. Combine teaching words from this list with those discussed in point 2 below.

2. Words that were misspelled in your students' written language experience stories. If these are "personal" words or ones that show up on the above lists, use a few of them for spelling in each lesson. They will not have wide application for your students' writing. However, if they are important to their major interests, i.e. sewing, baseball, teach them. Use your own judgement.

3. Words that are patterned. These could come from the lists of patterned words in TUTOR (Colvin, Root, 1984) or from language experience activities. These are good lists for teaching spelling to students. If they spell one word in a pattern correctly, the other words in the pattern should present no problem.

Even when using a sight word list for spelling purposes, you must decide which words need to be taught. You don't want to belittle the student by teaching words he already can spell correctly. How can you differentiate between those he can spell and those he cannot spell? One way to identify unknown words is through dictation.

The first 10 - 25 words on the "300 Most Frequently Used Words List" (Colvin, Root 1984) can be dictated to the student asking him to write each one. Use each word in a sentence so that you can be sure the student understands each word. Have the student correct his own paper: say the word and give the correct spelling. Keep a list of incorrectly spelled words for your own use. Give praise for those words spelled correctly, and remind the student that he will eventually be able to spell all 300 words, those words most frequently used.

Repeat the procedure with the next 10 - 25 words. Do this until you have a list of 25 - 30 words that have not been spelled correctly. These are the words that the student will be taught to spell.

Here's a practical technique to teach the spelling of individual words:

1. Write each word (in cursive or manuscript, depending on which the student uses) and pronounce each part of the word as it is written.

2. Ask the student to write the word under the one written by you and to pronounce it.

3. Have the student cover the words, write each word and say it.

4. Have him uncover the word and check for himself the spelling of the word.

5. If it is correctly spelled, repeat steps #2 and #3 three times. If the student can write the word three times correctly without looking at the model, he probably will spell it correctly when he writes it the next time. If it is incorrectly spelled, let the student correct it and repeat #2 and #3 until he has spelled it correctly three times.

6. Check the word (✓) on your list of words. He must spell it correctly on three separate days. (✓✓✓)

Spelling can be a group activity even though individuals have their own word lists. Short written spelling quizzes can be fun and certainly show students that they can spell after they have practiced a word. When teaching a small group, have a list of the words spelled incorrectly by each student in front of you. Address each individual student and dictate the first word on each list, telling each student the word he should write, using it in a sentence and then repeating the word. It's helpful to use a 3 by 5 card on each list to keep your place.

For example:

First student - **left** -He writes with his left hand. **left.**

Second student - **more** - He bought more than he needed. **more.**

Third student - **men** - Many men were at work. **men.**

Fourth student - **enough** - There is never enough time. **enough.**

Then return to the first student, continuing individual word lists.

When a student has spelled a word correctly on three different days, you can assume that he can spell the word in written assignments, and the word can be eliminated from his or her list.

This is a satisfying experience for most students who need help in spelling. They see the list of words dwindling, giving them confidence that they can write and they can spell.

We recommend the book **20,000 Words,** published by McGraw Hill Book Company for quick spelling listings.

Skills Resource File

A skills resource file is just that, a file of resources. It usually consists of single work sheets, on which students practice specific needed skills. These sheets can be categorized, alphabetized, and kept in a filing cabinet or in a box, with multiple copies of each exercise.

A practical skills Resource File could include worksheets on the following:

Abbreviations
Capitalization
Compound Words (Syllables)
Comprehension
Contents, Table of/Index
Contractions
Crossword Puzzles
Dictionary Skills
Main Idea
Opposites
Phonics
Possessives
Punctuation
Prefixes/suffixes
Root Words
Sequence
Sentence Structures
Sight Words
Silent Letters
Spelling
Synonyms

Following are some examples of materials in a few categories. You can adapt these and/or use your own ideas to evoke practice papers in any needed category.

Don't overlook practice sheets already prepared in local elementary schools where these subjects are being taught. Make sure, though, that these practice sheets are not designed solely for children but are general enough so they can be used for any age.

As you work with your skills resource file, share it with other tutors leading small groups. Your program might want to keep this Skills Resource File in its library, taking the responsibility for having multiple copies of each sheet.

Calendar

Many new readers don't understand a calendar. They have seen them, and they know there is a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc., but many don't realize that the first day of the month can come on any day. Probably the best way to develop an understanding is to make a calendar. Using monthly sheets, together make calendars for 3-month periods for each student.

The following is based on Ruth Colvin's experience with her small group.

"We checked the regular calendar and found that September 1 was on a Saturday. Each student numbered the days on his or her individual calendar – "1, 2, 3," but then they questioned how far to go? 30? 31? Most of us know the little jingle:

30 days hath September,
April, June and November,
All the rest have 31,
Except for February alone which has 28

Unless it's Leap Year and has 29.

But my students had never heard it before.

"After reciting the jingle, we gave September 30 days, ending on a Sunday. Going to October, the students weren't sure where to start day #1. When I pointed out that September 30 was on a Sunday, they realized, of course, October 1 would come on Monday.

"Completing the 3 month calendar, the students wrote down "lessons" on Monday and Wednesday. I wrote "lessons" on my calendar, too. Did they have any other commitments they wanted to put down? Janice had an appointment at the clinic for her daughter on Friday. As she wrote "clinic", she grinned, saying, "Now, I don't have to remember it myself."

"Making and keeping a calendar helps students remember scheduled meetings and therefore helps them to attend regularly. They found it made other areas of their lives less complicated because they needn't depend entirely on memory."

Month _____

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

A Final Note on Activities

The suggestions and examples in this section are just that – suggestions. But ideas may act as departure points for creating your own plan. Adapt suggestions given in your basic literacy training and in **TUTOR** (Colvin, Root). Use your own successful and creative ideas. Keep on the lookout for ideas that might work with your particular group. You can use newspapers and magazines as training tools, and you will get ideas from the many manuals and guidebooks available in your public library as well as the program library.

This part of the lesson is the most fun – creating and adapting to your students' specific needs. It is your job as tutor to keep just ahead of your students, motivating, inspiring, as you find new ways to teach. It is a big reward when your students can find answers – in a dictionary, in books, in the library – but in the meantime, keep filling in the gaps for them. It's exciting!

Alphabetizing

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Directions: Put the following words in alphabetical order.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
black	dog	cat
red	cat	mouse
green	tall	short
mat	little	fat

Words can be alphabetized by their second letter, too. Put the following words in alphabetical order.

clay

can

church

call

camera

Comment: This can start as a group activity, but because students work at different paces and some are more advanced, a variety of worksheets should be provided. This will allow individual students to advance as quickly as they can. This is a good activity for peer teaching.

You can continue to teach such dictionary skills as guide words and syllabication.

Capitalization

Directions: Capitalize the first letter in the names of people or places, in the first word of a sentence, in the title, and "I".

> "father, mother, i'm going to ohio. mary haywood will go with me. she said she would. we will get married this sunday and leave on monday."
>
> from A TRIP THROUGH TIME, Donald Salvucci, Cambridge Book Company, 1983.

Comment: After the students have put capital letters in the right places in several practice sheets, you will notice that they are putting capital letters in the right places in their stories, too.

Many adult new readers interchange upper and lower case (capital and small letters, never having known or having forgotten the rules for capitalization). The tutor should explain these rules in a simple manner. For example:

Capitalize:

- the first letter in names of people, places, the days of the week and the months of the year.
- the first letter of the first word in a sentence.
- the first letter of a word in a title.
- the letter "I" meaning myself.
- the first letters of a person's first and last names.

The tutor may write stories, leaving out the capitals, and ask students to supply them. Or stories from books can be copied and the capitals deleted and used for practice by the students. Be sure the students can read the stories that are used. Always, note on the worksheet the sources of the stories used.

Punctuation

Directions: Put in the periods and question marks.

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Jim led her by the hand to a small room in the library There was a woman in the room, smiling at her She looked like someone from a TV soap ad

"Hi, are you Susan " The soap lady knew her name Was this lady going to be her teacher She didn't look like a teacher

TIME FOR A CHANGE, Marcia Cebulska, 1983: New York, Cambridge Book Company

Comments: This may be done as a group for practice, asking each student to read until he thinks there should be a period or question mark at the end of the sentence. It doesn't take too long for one bright student to recognize an important clue; the first word in a new sentence starts with a capital letter. Students are taking giant steps in learning the first rules of punctuation. They feel confident, for you have made it seem logical to them.

Explain that periods (dots) are placed at the end of sentences. A simple explanation such as "A sentence is a complete thought" helps them understand, for it makes sense. Read sentence after sentence, stopping at the end, noting the periods. Tell them that a question mark is placed at the end of a sentence that asks a question. Read some together so that the students understand the meaning of "question".

Capitals, Periods, Question Marks

Directions: Capitalize the words that should be capitalized, and put in periods or question marks.

A LONG ROAD

suddenly the quiet night was broken by the sound of a plane the men froze would they be caught but the plane flew over, and the men went on

miguel had made it he was in texas in the united states

from A LONG ROAD, Fernando Javier Galan; 1983; New York: Cambridge Book Company

Chapter Five: Administration

This chapter contains examples of forms which will be helpful to you in your record keeping and lesson planning for small groups.

As with any tutoring you do, you will need to keep reports on your students. The minimum information you will need can be found on the Literacy Volunteers Initial and Annual student report forms. (See report forms on the following pages.) There is other information that you or your program might find helpful in evaluating the program's effectiveness in teaching reading. It pertains to a student's record of achievement and reason(s) for termination when the time comes for each to leave the program. This information can be kept in a class folder in which you record the number of tutoring hours for each student and the number of preparation hours you spend for each class or you might prefer to keep it in each student's individual folder.

Reasons for Terminating

1. Completed objectives
2. Health problems
3. Day Care problems
4. Transportation problems
5. Tutoring location
6. No interest
7. Time conflicts
8. Moved
9. Tutor termination
10. Personal
11. Unknown

Student Achievements

1. Entered ABE
2. Obtained diploma
3. Passed GED
4. Entered other program
5. Became U.S. citizen
6. Voted for first time
7. Obtained a job
8. Obtained driver's license
9. Survival skills achieved
10. Entered Higher Education
11. Other

(Adapted from Uniform Reporting Plan, LV of Connecticut, 1985)

Lesson Planning

You will need to make a Group Lesson Plan. Obviously this will include a plan for each individual student as well as those activities involving the whole group. (See example on the following pages.)

Progress Chart

Of course, tutors should keep records of individual student's accomplishments. But most students are excited about keeping their own progress charts. They realize accomplishment when they check off things.

Progress Charts can be as individual as is each student, or can be a composite of the Small Group.

A 3-month Progress Chart is motivational; it allows enough time for the student to see progress.

Students will vary in how fast they learn. You must emphasize that there is no competition. Let the students know that they can go at their own speed. Their rate of learning will depend on their previous knowledge and current ability. Progress Charts are motivational tools. Here is an example of a Progress Chart.

However Progress Charts will differ depending upon the skills the students are mastering.

Many students like to record the books or stories they have read. It is a visual sign of achievement. Students also like to keep a record of the stories they have written.

LVA Initial Student Report

Initial Student Report (BR)

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA, INC.

Date _____

Affiliate _____

Name _____ Phone _____
Last First Initial

Address _____ Sex _____ Age _____ (Est.)

Contact date _____ Tutoring started _____

Referred by _____ Agency or relationship _____

Program: Teen-in-School _____ ABE _____ Corrections _____ Migrant _____

Industry _____ Hospitals _____ Library _____ General _____

Tutor: _____ Student liaison person _____

Test Results - READ, Part 3, Pre-Test

A Word Recognition - Instructional level _____

B Reading Comprehension - Instructional level _____

C Listening Comprehension - Instructional level _____

Date testing completed _____ Tester _____

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDENT INFORMATION

Educational Background: Elementary: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 High School: 1 2 3 4
(Circle highest level completed) Other _____

Ethnic Background: White ___ Black ___ Oriental ___ Native American ___ Other _____

Employment: Occupation _____ Employer _____

Unemployed _____ Not in labor market ___ Welfare: Yes ___ No ___

Marital Status _____ No. of Children _____

Specify any significant physical/mental handicaps which would affect learning: _____

Personality traits relevant to tutoring situation _____

Special reason for seeking help _____

Time available for tutoring: _____

Suggested place _____

Additional comments _____

Data recorded by: _____

LVA Annual Student Report

Annual Student Report (BR)

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA, INC.

Date _____

Affiliate _____

Name _____ Phone _____
Last First Initial

Address _____

No. of hours tutored since previous report _____ Total hours _____

Status of student:
Continuing ____ Discontinuing ____
Reason if discontinuing: _____

Status of tutor:
Continuing ____ Discontinuing ____
Reason if discontinuing: _____

Tutor: _____ Meeting time and place _____

Test Results - READ, Part 3, Post-Test
A Word Recognition - Instructional level _____
B Reading Comprehension - Instructional level _____
C Listening Comprehension - Instructional level _____

Date Testing Completed _____ Tester _____

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDENT INFORMATION

Employment changes since previous report:

New job (specify) _____ Lost job _____

Improved job (specify) _____ Not in labor market _____

Welfare status change to: _____ on _____ off No change _____

Tutoring materials used:

Tutor's evaluation of student:
Progress in reading: _____ Writing _____

Changes in attitude: _____

Personality traits: _____

Additional Comments:

GROUP LESSON PLAN

Date	Student #1	Student #2	Student #3
Homework			
Introduce or Discuss Topic			
Writing			
Reading			
Language Experience Group/_____			
Other Activities			
Homework Notes			

Materials Needed:

PROGRESS CHART

NAME _____

Beginning Date _____

Ending Date _____

(Put dates when assignment is completed)

SIGHT WORD CARDS

Group 1 **Group 2** **Group 3** **Group 4** **Group 5** **Group 6** **Group 7** **Group 8** **Group 9**

_____

_____

_____

_____

BOOKS READ (Title and dates read)

_____

_____

_____

_____

WRITING (Titles and dates written)

_____

_____

_____

_____

WORK SHEETS (Titles and dates completed)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comments: This sheet is to be filled out by student.

Chapter Six: A Final Thought

One of the earliest points made in this book was to the effect that tutoring a group of basic reading students is different from tutoring on a one-to-one basis.

You, as a tutor, will often have several activities going on in the room because different students will be at work on different assignments. This necessitates an ability to be aware of what is happening concurrently with a number of people. You will also need repeatedly to assess your leadership styles as the group develops and changes through the earlier mentioned stages of Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning.

Consider this: You will also reap the reward of seeing the individual students in the group develop as they move from these stages, gaining more reading skills and the intangibles of broader horizons and higher self-esteem. If you as an experienced tutor desire to make a greater impact on illiteracy in your area, Small Group Tutoring is for you. You will find the interplay of several personalities stimulating and the chances of the students' catching fire from one another are excellent. It is this excitement that is drawing more and more tutors around the country to Small Group Tutoring.

"Our group likes working together as each person can help the other with difficult words . . . the students feel it is important that each member of the group be able to communicate with each other and get along well."

— Jackie K., tutor

"I have noticed when working with two people . . . that they seem to feel freer to question me, which, of course, gives me a better feel for how to explain . . . Sometimes the bolder person may ask a question both are wondering about – a real advantage."

— Liz F., tutor

"They (the students) said they thought it was more fun and interesting in a group. They can watch each other learn and also help each other. It is more of a game, albeit a serious game, when you work in groups. They enjoy sharing ideas with everyone.

"Basil made an interesting comment: in one way it is good to have another person or persons in the class because it takes some of the pressure off while the ***other*** *person is reading or answering a question, but in another way pressure is increased at home to do homework because you have to keep up with how well the other students are doing.*

"They enjoy listening to each other read and following along silently. It gives the students time to think and practice while the other person reads."

— Mary D., tutor

"You need time and patience to listen to someone, to answer questions – You'll get to open yourself more in a group. What do I like best about being in a group? Discussing things with each other – sharing ideas with each other. You learn how to speak in front of others."

— Ralph A., student

QUES: What qualities do you think a student needs to work well in a group?

ANS: Helpfulness and ambition – wanting to learn more.

— Trevor M., student

QUES: What do you like about being in a group? "I think it's wonderful, because everyone seems to be learning – words, maps. We take it home and study it. The people are nice. Everybody seems to cooperate, everybody is of one accord. This group – everyone is pulling together."

— Dora H., student

Suggested Resources

Action, Unit Book 3. Dolly Hasenbiller and Mel Cebulash. Scholastic Book Services: New York, NY, 1977.

Adult Literacy Series. Cambridge Book Company: New York, 1983.

Anthropology: The Story of People, Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern.
Art in Your Hometown, Elsa Marston
Choices, Marian McKenzie
Decisions, Marian McKenzie
Jesus of Nazareth, David M. Harralson
Life of Lucy Fern, The (2 Volumes), Moira Crone
Light in the Dark, A, Judy Simmons
Long Road, A, Fernando Javier Galan
Maine Forest, The, Roger L. Merchant
Memories of East Utica, (2 Volumes), Eugene Paul Nasser
One Summer, Fernando Javier Galan
Sayings and Stories, Marcia Cebulska
Some Artists — Their Lives, Loves and Luck, Elsa Marston
Stories from the Old Testament, David M. Harralson
These are Your Neighbors, Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern
Time for a Change, Marcia Cebulska
Trust, Roger Merchant
What is a Crime?, Mark Hansel
Users Guide for the Adult Literacy Series

Applied Writing, Weinstein and Bonne, New York City Technical College, CUNY Division of Continuing Education: New York, NY, 1982

Building Dictionary Skills in English, Linda Schinke-Llano and Richard A. Spears, National Textbook Company, Lincolnwood, IL: 1984

Capitalization and Punctuation (An Overview), Richard A. Bonning, Barnell Loft, Ltd., New York, NY: 1981

Cultures A, B, C. Scott, Foresman Adult Reading Comprehension, Violet Malone, Scott Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL: 1982

Life Skills, Book 2, for the World of Work, Ellen Kaplan, Educational Designs, Inc., New York, NY: 1982

Life Skills: Writing, Donn Massfelder and Ellen Kaplan, Educational Designs, Inc., New York, NY: 1981

Messages, Level A, Violet Malone, Scott, Foresman Adult Reading, Comprehension Series, Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL: 1982

Modern Short Biographies, Henry L. Christ, Globe Book Company, Inc., New York, NY: 1975

Practical Skills in Reading, Level 1, Gould, Inc. Educational Systems Division, El Monte, CA: 1979
Motorcycle
Blastoff to Dewey High
Belrose P.D.
Lifeguard
Response Book and Projects, Answer Keys, Unit Post Tests, and Teacher's Guide

Prescriptive Spelling Program, Teacher's Edition, Book 2, William Wittenberg, Barnell Loft, Ltd., New York, NY: 1980

Read, Recall, Reflect, Paul Berg and Frank Crawford, Scholastic Book Services, New York, NY: 1979

Snapshots, Cambridge Book Company, New York, NY: 1984

Stories of Surprise and Wonder, Robert R. Potter, Globe Book Company, Inc., New York, NY: 1979. tic Book Services, New York, NY: 1979

Survival Vocabulary, Jim Rickey, Janus Book Publishers, Hayward, CA: 1980
Banking Language
Clothing Language
Credit Language
Driver's License Language
Drugstore Language
Entertainment Language
Medical Language
Restaurant Language
Supermarket Language

Writing Sentences and Paragraphs, Margaret Martin Maggs, English Survival Series, Voluntad Publishing, Inc. A subsidiary of National Textbook Company, Lincolnwood, IL: 1984

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1982. READ. Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.
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Fingeret, Arlene.
1982. "The Illiterate Underclass: Demythologizing an American Stigma," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University.

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1983. **A Long Road.** New York, NY: Cambridge Book Company.

Lawson, Virginia K.
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1983. **Tutor Training Manual** (Draft Edition). New York, NY.

Leslie, Louis A.
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Salvucci, Donald.
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Tuckman, B.W., "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups", **Psychological Bulletin,** 1965, Vol. 63 p. 384-399.

Tuckman, B.W. and Jensen, M.A.C., "Stages of Small Group Development Revisited", **Group and Organizational Studies,** 1977, p. 419-427.

If You Tutor A Small Group . . .

Please fill out the following questionnaire and return it to V.K. Lawson, Ph.D., Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., 404 Oak Street, Syracuse, NY 13203.

1. Which section of the handbook was most helpful to you?
   - ☐ Introduction
   - ☐ Organizing a Group
   - ☐ Group Dynamics
   - ☐ Methodology and Materials
   - ☐ Administration
   - ☐ Suggested Resources

2. Please share with us any successful group activities you have used. Use the back of this page if you need more room.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Please list any books you have found especially helpful in your group tutoring.

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. What changes or additions would you suggest for this handbook?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Thank you for helping LVA continue to offer the most helpful training materials possible.

9/85

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